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Sirdaria I. Williams

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, swil282@lsu.edu

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WONDER WOMEN: HOW RACE AND GENDER INFLUENCED
NEWS COVERAGE IN THE 2017
NEW ORLEANS AND ATLANTA MAYORAL ELECTIONS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Manship School of Mass Communication
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Mass Communication

by
Sirdaria Williams
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Thank you,

Sirdaria I. Williams

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
<u>National Narrative:</u>	1
NEW ORLEANS ELECTION BACKGROUND INFORMATION	4
<u>Cantrell:</u>	4
<u>Charbonnet:</u>	6
ATLANTA ELECTION BACKGROUND INFORMATION	7
<u>Bottoms:</u>	8
<u>Norwood:</u>	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
<u>Theoretical Framework: Agenda Setting Theory & Framing</u>	12
<u>Female Candidates:</u>	14
<u>Minority Candidates:</u>	17
<u>Stereotypes:</u>	18
<u>Intersectionality:</u>	22
METHODOLOGY	23
FINDINGS	28
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION	35
CONCLUSION	40
APPENDIX	42
<i>A. 1: Supplemental Charts & Tables</i>	42
REFERENCES	48

ABSTRACT

The few research studies that explore the media's coverage of female and or minority candidates have primarily been limited to mix gender elections. Not much attention has been given to what coverage of elections featuring all female candidates looks like. Do atypical candidates lead to atypical coverage? To expand this area of research, this study examines local newspaper's coverage in mayoral runoff elections. This study's exploration of how the media portrays candidates running in all female races relies on a content analysis of the two cities examined primary newspapers. The findings from this study are varied and complex. The findings reveal moderate support for the idea that news coverage of elections featuring two female candidates is different from the norm. The results indicate that women running for office still face a clear disadvantage in terms of securing balanced trait and issue coverage. Results also indicated that contrary to what was expected, in elections featuring two women of the same race/ethnic background, even two minority women, mentions of the candidates and or potential voters race are not as prevalent. Understanding how journalists cover female candidates is timely and essential if we are to ensure female candidates are covered accurately and objectively By studying the media's coverage of all female runoff elections, this study provides an understanding about how female candidates are framed when there is not a White male candidate in the election.

INTRODUCTION

National Narrative:

The blue wave that swept the country November 17, 2017 was not just a victory for Democrats, but also a resounding win for women who defied the odds to make history. Election night was also historic for minority and LGBTQ women. Women claimed big victories that Tuesday in a night that marked many firsts, and could signal the start of a sea change for women in politics.

Several cities elected women for the first time as mayor, or in the case of Seattle, its first in nearly a century. Jenny Durkan became the first openly gay mayor and first woman since the 1920s in Seattle. Before Jenny Durkan was elected mayor of Seattle in November, there had only been two other openly lesbian mayors of major U.S. cities in history: former Houston Mayor Annise Parker, who was the first openly LGBTQ mayor of any major American city; and Jackie Biskupski, the current mayor of Salt Lake City. Michelle Kaufusi became the first woman elected mayor in the 157-year history of Provo, the third-largest city in Utah. In Charlotte, N.C., a near 30-year veteran of local government, Vi Lyles, was elected to be its first black woman as mayor to run North Carolina's largest city. Mary Parham-Copeland, who is black, became Milledge, Georgia's first female mayor; and Cathy Murillo was elected the first Latina mayor of Santa Barbara, California. In Topeka, Kansas, Michelle De La Isla became the city's first Hispanic mayor and the second woman to be elected to the office. Women were also elected to the mayor's office for the first time in Manchester, N.H., Newton, Mass., New Orleans, L.A., and Atlanta, G.A

The 2017 election was also remarkable for the success of LGBTQ candidates, many of whom made history by winning their races. Prior to the 2017 elections, only six openly

transgender people held office in the U.S., according to the Victory Fund, an LGBTQ political action committee. Danica Roem became Virginia's first transgender lawmaker, and ultimately the first transgender person ever to serve in a state legislature. Along with her, Dawn Adams became the state's first openly gay woman elected to the House of Delegates. Following the slate of historic wins for transgender politicians, Andrea Jenkins in Minneapolis became the first transgender woman of color elected to a city council in a major city. Lisa Middleton in Palm Springs became California's first transgender candidate to win a city council seat.

Other first on the local level include Sudanese-American, Mazahir Salih, becoming the first Muslim woman and immigrant to serve on the Iowa City Council. Nassau County, N.Y., elected its first woman county executive, and in Boston and Boise, Idaho, voters elected enough women that their city councils will now be either majority or near-majority female for the first time in their history. At the state level, women in Georgia, Virginia and Washington claimed victory in open legislative seats formerly held by men or outright defeated male incumbents to make gains in state-level representation. New Jersey elected Sheila Oliver to be its first black Democratic woman to serve as a lieutenant governor, and the first two Latinas were elected to the Virginia House of Delegates.

Purpose:

This study will examine the press coverage of the 2017 New Orleans and Atlanta mayoral elections, both of which had two women candidates in the runoff. *The Times Picayune*, and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, New Orleans and Atlanta's main publications, will be used. This study will examine the amount and types of trait and issue coverage the candidates received. Though the type of newspaper coverage candidates receive can affect the public's perception of them, this study will not examine the effects of political candidate coverage on the public.

This study is significant in that it compares how local press covered mayoral runoff elections involving only female candidates with no White male for the sake of comparison. Particularly, this analysis investigates if, even when comparing two nontraditional candidates to one another, does the press still revert back to its traditional depictions of female and minority candidates.

Prior research from communication and political science scholars has shown continuous systematic disparities in the news coverage of political candidates based on gender and race, differences that may hurt a woman or minority's chances of victory. Considering the recent change in local and state political landscapes with women running for office and winning in record numbers, this study examines a topic that is more important now than ever. This past November, one year out from Election Day 2018, the number of female House and Senate candidates was nearly double the number at the same point in 2016, according to data from the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers. The 2017 November election results offered promising wins for women and diversity, with cities across the country electing their first women, minority and or transgender candidates into public office.

Understanding how journalists cover women candidates is timely and essential if we are to ensure female candidates are covered accurately and objectively. Researches have yet to address what occurs in news coverage when two women run against each other without a White male candidate in the race. Not much thought has not been given to whether media will break from, or continue previous norms of stereotypical and trait coverage of women. The 2017 New Orleans and Atlanta mayoral elections offered the perfect circumstances to research this topic.

NEW ORLEANS ELECTION BACKGROUND INFORMATION

New Orleans has made great strides over the past eight years, but much remains to be done. The city's next mayor would have to continue emergency and long-term fixes at the Sewerage and Water Board, accelerate street repairs and catch-basin cleanings, boost police manpower and morale, reduce crime and blight, enforce short-term rental policies, reduce economic disparities, and improve the overall quality of life in the city. Every one of those is a make-or-break challenge. In the beginning, eighteen candidates qualified to be New Orleans next mayor.

New Orleans watched for months as the top three candidates for mayor shuffled to the lead in poll after poll. Then on Saturday, October 14, 2017 the voters spoke. City Councilwoman LaToya Cantrell outpaced her closest rival, former city judge Desiree Charbonnet, by nine points. Cantrell took 39 percent of the vote to Charbonnet's 30 percent. The two African American Democrat women earned their spots in a runoff, guaranteeing the city would elect its first woman as mayor on November 18th.

When that November 18th came, Cantrell won with 60.4 percent of the vote, making her New Orleans' 51st, and first woman mayor in the city's nearly 300-year history. New Orleans voters elected the city council member over the former city judge, capping off a contentious election cycle marked by scandals over city credit card spending, multiple attack ads and debate over the future of the city's post-Katrina infrastructure, short-term rentals, crime, and the troubled Sewerage & Water Board.

Cantrell:

LaToya Cantrell, the 45-year-old African American Democrat mayoral candidate grew up in Los Angeles, and moved to New Orleans in 1990 at the age of 18 to attend college at Xavier University of Louisiana. She's now the second Xavier alum to become mayor, the first

being Dutch Morial, the city's first black mayor. New Orleans mayors have typically come from families with political pedigree, and have well-established ties to the civic and business community. The great majority have claimed native roots. Cantrell, on the other hand, was a relative newcomer on the public scene, and the "against the odds" candidate. She is the first outsider elected to the office since Chicago-born Victor Schiro in 1961. Although not a native,

Cantrell's Xavier connections gave her a strong network of contributors, volunteers and supporters.

Cantrell came to prominence as a leader in Broadmoor during the tumultuous early days of New Orleans' recovery. At a time when some suggested turning her neighborhood into green space, she led the grassroots effort to make Broadmoor one of the first neighborhoods to come back strong. During that time, she learned how city government works from the citizens' point of view, which served her well when she won a special election for the District B council seat in 2012. On the council, she earned a reputation for personally addressing constituents' concerns and tackling tough issues. One of her biggest accomplishments on the governing body was spearheading the passage of a smoking ban in city bars, restaurants and casinos, which took effect in April 2015. She also helped consolidate 14 disparate council committees into eight, which increased councilmembers' participation and engagement.

During her campaign, Cantrell pledged to give police the tools and resources they need to do their job, and to let the police chief run the department as he sees fit. She emphasized wanting to treat the root causes of violent crime by bolstering programs for youth and families while pushing New Orleans police department to identify and pursue the city's most violent offenders.

On another important front, Cantrell made promises that she would push to hire an experienced engineer to lead the troubled Sewerage and Water Board. Her platform for economic

development was tailored to the city's diverse neighborhoods yet rooted in presenting clear guidelines for public incentives.

Charbonnet:

A native of New Orleans, her last name is one that has been associated with local politics for generations. The cousin of a former state legislator and the sister of a political operative, Charbonnet has been involved in politics for decades. During her campaign, the former judge emphasized her lineage, which can be traced back to late 18th century New Orleans, in efforts to perhaps to capture the votes of residents who felt New Orleans needed a native as mayor.

She entered her first local race, for recorder of mortgages, in 1998 at age 29, four years after graduating from Loyola University's law school; and a year after being hired at a law firm run by her brother, longtime political insider Bernard "Bunny" Charbonnet Jr. She won in an upset, defeating an incumbent backed by then-Mayor Marc Morial. Charbonnet's 1998 campaign, led by her brother, benefited from the support of a coalition of black political organizations.

Once elected in 1998, Charbonnet launched an initiative to educate renters about homeownership opportunities. When Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters forced some government offices to temporarily relocate outside New Orleans, her office stayed put so people wouldn't have to drive hours to update their mortgage records with the city. After the storm, she supported legislation to fold her office into the Civil District Court clerk's office. Moving on to the Municipal Court bench, Charbonnet oversaw the second merger of her career, which was that of the city's municipal and traffic courts. She also created a diversion program for nonviolent offenders such as the homeless, mentally ill and drug-addicted individuals. It was designed to keep them out of jail and get them much-needed treatment.

With her years of experience in city courtrooms, she publicized herself as the candidate who knew the most about curbing crime and made restoring public safety and affordable housing a keystone of her campaign. She often described her crime platform as ambitious, but realistic. In it, she called for immediate steps that included conducting a national search for a police superintendent, increasing the size of the New Orleans Police Department to over 1,500 officers over the next five years and making New Orleans Police Department more effective.

Charbonnet also released a detailed affordable housing plan during her campaign that included helping seniors secure property tax freezes, encouraging the city's major employers to offer programs to help their workers rent apartments or purchase homes near their jobs and improving housing policies and programs that she believed would help preserve and protect established residential neighborhoods. The plan also included additional restrictions on short-term rentals.

ATLANTA ELECTION BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Atlanta, Newark and Washington D.C. are the only U.S. cities with four decades of unbroken black leadership. Atlanta's streak was at risk of ending because of changing

demographics. The next mayor would inherit a city that is younger and more diverse, with some voters putting emphasis on the importance of black leadership. The November 7th nonpartisan election came at a critical junction for the city of Atlanta, which was and is still trying to balance tremendous growth in jobs, development and population, with concerns that the divide between the haves and the have-nots is growing. The usual Atlanta problems of traffic congestion, taxes, and schools were major issues this election season, along with new issues like housing affordability and gentrification.

Nearly a dozen candidates competed to succeed term-limited Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed. Two Atlanta city councilwomen, Keisha Lance Bottoms and Mary Norwood, were the top two candidates in Atlanta's primary mayoral election, qualifying them for the December 5th run-off. Bottoms, a Black Democrat, had 27 percent of the vote to Norwood, a White Independent's 21 percent. For the second time in history, it was official that a woman would lead the City of Atlanta, and if Norwood was elected, its first White woman as mayor.

The December 5th runoff between the two city council members split Atlanta just about in half. The combined totals from all counties left Bottoms with 46,667 votes, or 50.45 percent, and Norwood with 45,835 votes, or 49.55 percent. The 832 votes that separated them amounted to less than 1 percent of the 92,502 votes cast. The process of choosing Atlanta's next mayor narrowed down to two candidates, one black, one white, after a campaign that laid plain the city's sore spots of race, gender and political grudges.

Bottoms:

Keisha Lance-Bottoms, the 48-year-old African American Democrat mayoral candidate, graduated from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in 1991 and earned a law degree from Georgia State University College of Law. Bottoms is the daughter of Sylvia Robinson and

the late R&B singer Major Lance known for his song "Um, Um, Um, Um, Um, Um." In campaign speeches and her YouTube bio-flick, Bottoms told the story of how her grandparents came to Atlanta in a horse and buggy, she also didn't shy away from talking about her parents' challenges. Major Lance, her father, was a boxer-turned-dancer-turned singer who opened for the Beatles on their first U.S. tour in 1964. However, his career eventually dried up, and the bank took their Collier Heights house. Bottoms communicated how she believed her experiences transcending childhood poverty, and her father's incarceration allowed her to connect with residents across class and race.

She described her childhood experiences as life-changing experiences that inspired her to offer herself for public service, and ultimately propelled her into law school. During her campaign she often said she entered the race to make sure that every Atlanta resident has a chance to succeed. Bottoms is now the second black woman to lead the city of Atlanta as mayor following Shirley Franklin, who served from 2002 to 2010.

Bottoms was elected to the Atlanta City Council in 2009 and re-elected in 2013, representing District 11, which covers a large portion of southwest Atlanta. Outgoing Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed endorsed her to succeed him as the city's next mayor. Bottoms was executive director of Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority, which has maintained public facilities including Philips Arena, Zoo Atlanta and the Olympic cauldron, from 2015 until she stepped down in April 2107. In that role, Bottoms helped broker the \$30 million sale of Turner Field and surrounding parking lots to Georgia State University and private development group. With the support of two of the nation's most influential Democrats, Senators Cory Booker and Kamala Harris, as well as the previous mayor of Atlanta calling her "his successor" Bottoms automatically seemed like a shoo-in for the job.

Norwood:

Sixty-five-year-old Augusta Georgia native, Mary Norwood, graduated from Emory in 1974 with a history degree. She took a job as a secretary at Rounsaville, a now-defunct radio network in Atlanta, and by 30 was running seven stations. Norwood's interest in politics began, almost literally, in her backyard. In 1990, as president of the Tuxedo Park Civic Association, she led an effort to protect the community as a historic district. This pushed her into her public service career, in which neighborhood politics was, and still is her mantra. Norwood first joined the City Council in 2001 and served for two consecutive terms. In 2013, Norwood was re-elected to the City Council as a Citywide Council member, Post 2-At-Large.

In 2013, Norwood began serving on the Mayor's Commission on Waste and Efficiency, the Repeat Offenders Commission and the Code Enforcement Commission, which she co-chairs. Serving as zoning chair, she shepherded the re-writing of Atlanta's zoning code. Norwood has also sponsored legislation to improve city services, better employee relations, and she made efforts towards improving public service presence.

Norwood entered the 2017 mayoral race as the only Independent candidate, and the presumptive front-runner. Decades of knocking on doors from Buckhead to Bankhead, and her past battle with Mayor Kasim Reed, gave her an edge over the other candidates. Arguably, she had the most name recognition. She nearly defeated outgoing Mayor Reed in the 2009 mayoral election, only losing by a margin of 714 votes. During her campaign, Norwood emphasized the need for transparency and accountability at city hall. She spoke about wanting all city budgets, contracts and other relevant documents to be posted at an easily accessible website so the public could know what is done with tax dollars. She also wanted to increase the police force to a full 2,000 sworn officers and get crime under control. Norwood largely focused on neighborhoods

rather than Atlanta's business community, during her campaign. She wanted to appoint "neighborhood ambassadors" to act as liaisons with her administration, if elected. The first black female mayor of Atlanta and Mayor Kasim Reed's predecessor Shirley Franklin endorsed Norwood. So did City Council President Ceasar Mitchell and a host of other high-profile black and white former candidates and politicians.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature predicts that challenges to women who pursue political office positions may be strengthened by the amount of coverage they receive, as well as the amount of trait and issue coverage in news stories covering them during their campaigns. This section reviews literature on framing and agenda setting theory. This section also reviews scholarly articles on

female candidates, minority candidates, stereotypes, and intersectionality in relation to their effects on news coverage.

Theoretical Framework: Agenda Setting Theory & Framing

Media have long played a role in how political candidates are perceived, and may have a role in how elections are decided. An understanding of second-level agenda setting and framing theories provide a helpful framework for analyzing the hypotheses presented in this study. In order to examine and understand what changes, if any, occur in newspaper coverage when two women run against each other without a male candidate in the race, it is necessary to evaluate how local newspapers portrayed the candidate's agenda through the use of frames. Cohen's (1963) theory of agenda-setting, which expanded upon Lippman's (1922) work, describes the agenda-setting role of the media not as telling people what to think, but what to think about. McCombs and Shaw (1972) state that by selecting the news stories to print or broadcast, news professionals "play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position" (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, p. 176). If the frame of competence is not ascribed a high priority by the media, it is unlikely to rank highly on the public agenda. The converse is also true – if a frame is given a high priority, it is likely to rank higher on the public agenda. For example, if a candidate is consistently framed in terms of her education, with discussions of her multiple degrees and academic accomplishments featured in the coverage, publics could use these frames to make sense of her as a candidate and may overlook other factors such as successful business history or policy platforms that are not as prominently framed.

Although any object of communication can be an agenda, early agenda-setting research studied agendas of public issues, examining how much priority each public issue was given in the news (McCombs et al., 2000). Researchers proved, “the degree of emphasis placed on issues in the news influences the priority accorded these issues among the public” (McCombs et al., 2000, p. 77), providing support for the premise of agenda-setting theory.

Political candidates running for public office are also objects of communication and thus can be objects of both media and public agendas. The first level of agenda setting occurs at the object level. First-level agenda setting examines what object the media covers and what priority they assign to each object. This tells the audience “what” to think about, which in this study are the candidates (Baran & Davis, 2009). The second level of agenda setting occurs at the attribute level, which describes the characteristics or features of the object at hand. This tells people “how” to think about the object (Baran & Davis, 2009, p. 282). When the media presents a candidate, information about the attributes of the candidate are also conveyed. Studies have refined the theory, finding that attributes can include candidate qualifications and personality traits (McCombs et al., 1997), as well as intellectual ability, moral quality, and leadership abilities (Kiousis, 2005).

Attributes can be described as either positive or negative, with the public’s perception matching the media assessment of candidates (Coleman & Banning, 2006; Kiousis & McCombs, 2004). Wu and Coleman (2009) found negative media messages were more easily transferred to the minds of the public than positive descriptions of candidates. Some studies have found second level, or attribute coverage, can have a greater agenda-setting influence on voters than coverage of first level issues (Wu & Coleman, 2009). Golan and Wanta (2001), for example, found that voters were more able to link personal characteristics (if they were moral or trustworthy) with

candidates based on media messages than they were issue positions. Further, they found that the media's tone mattered, as traits that were portrayed negatively evoked negative assessments, and negative depictions conjured negative thoughts of candidates in the minds of voters. Similarly, Kiouisis (2005) found how the media covered candidates' attributes had an appreciable influence on moving voters from a neutral position on candidates to a nonneutral position.

Second-level agenda setting and framing theory are strongly linked. McCombs et al. (2000) state that a strength of agenda-setting theory is its compatibility with other theories, particularly framing theory. The two theories are inherently linked: "to frame is to ascribe defining attributes to an object; in other words, to define an agenda of attributes that characterizes the principal defining features of an object" (p. 79). Goffman (1974) coined the term frame to describe, "a specific set of expectations used to make sense of a social situation at a given point in time" (Baran & Davis, 2009, p. 317). In relation to media studies and media frames, a frame can be defined as "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration" (Tankard et al., 1991, p. 3). Research examining framing in relation to female political candidates is helpful in further understanding how the media covers female politicians during elections, and especially races featuring all female candidates.

Female Candidates:

The academic literature on gender and politics has expanded significantly over the years. Researchers have examined certain differences in coverage that male and female politicians receive. Kahn's (1992, 1994) studies of the differences in coverage that male and female US

Senate candidates received in the 1980s, showed that male politicians received more overall coverage, less negatively toned coverage, more issue coverage, as well as less stereotypical issue coverage and less personalized coverage than their female counterparts.

Using an experiment and prototype articles that resembled the different coverage patterns she observed, Kahn further found that these patterns had important consequences for voter evaluations. Candidates whose coverage resembled the “female candidate” pattern of press coverage did worse with voters in a hypothetical contest than those who received the “male candidate” press coverage. The hypothetical Senate candidate receiving “female” press coverage was seen by voters as less electable, with weaker leadership skills. Replications of Kahn’s research have reported both similar and contradictory findings on the differences in coverage for male and female politicians, while others suggest that these patterns and norms no longer hold.

Dunaway et al.’s (2013) “Traits versus Issues: How Female Candidates Shape Coverage of Senate and Gubernatorial Races” examines how trait versus issue coverage affects female candidates seeking political offices. The authors of this study focus on amounts of trait and issue coverage of elections with and without female candidates. They believe that “media attention to candidates’ personal traits is thought to be particularly pernicious for women candidates, because that coverage may tend to de-emphasize substantive qualifications” (p.1). In their study they also explore how the level and type of office women seek influence the degree of candidate trait coverage in the news.

The authors consider candidate races to be the most accurate portrayal of contemporary American campaigns. Their methodology consists of data collection from “senate and gubernatorial races, spanning multiple states and including male and female candidates, and the

approximately 10,000 analyzed news stories these races generated” (p. 3). As they predicted, races in which women run are more likely to yield news coverage focused on candidate traits.

More recent studies find that the amount of coverage between male and female political candidates is balanced. Devitt’s (2002) study analyzed newspaper coverage on 1998 gubernatorial candidates to determine if a difference exists in the framing of male and female candidates. In his study of four gubernatorial races, Devitt analyzed every related news story in six daily newspapers between September 1, 1998 and November 3, 1998 (Election Day). His study concluded that while newspapers treated candidates of both sexes equally in terms of volume of coverage, the newspapers were more likely to frame their coverage of female candidates in terms of their personal traits, including appearance and personality, while male candidates were more frequently framed by their ideology and public policy issue record (Devitt, 2002). Male candidates were framed in terms of policy issues in 33.8% of cases, with female candidates being framed on the issues only 28.9% of the time. In terms of personal characteristics such as image and personality, females were covered this way in 17.3% of cases compared with 12.1% for males. The author also found evidence that the differences in the way the male and female candidates were framed could often be attributed to the gender of the reporter – specifically that female reporters were more likely to frame candidates in terms of image and personality than their male counterparts (Devitt, 2002).

Dianne Bystrom and her coauthors (2004) also find similarity in amount of coverage in mixed-gender U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races between 1998 and 2002. In a more recent study, examining women Gubernatorial candidates in the 1990s, Hayes and Lawless (2016) do not find many direct gender effects on coverage once other factors are controlled.

One of the most consistent findings to emerge from studies is that female candidates receive more attention to appearance, personality, and family than men. For example, Bystrom and her coauthors found that 8 percent of news stories about female candidates mentioned the candidate's marital status, compared with only 1 percent of men's news stories. Their results also showed that 6 percent of women's news stories in that year mentioned appearance, compared with only 1 percent of the men's stories. Bystrom and her colleagues also found disparities in the extent to which reporters call attention to the gender of women candidates compared with men candidates. The first hypothesis will test to see if in the absence of a male candidate, if women still receive more trait coverage than issue coverage.

H1: Candidates in both the New Orleans and Atlanta runoff elections will receive more trait coverage than issue coverage.

Minority Candidates:

Scholars have explored how news reporting on minority candidates makes racial and ethnic identity salient in ways not evident in news framing when only white candidates are involved. In an examination of the 2004 elections, Caliendo and McIlwain (2006) found that electoral races that included Latino and African American candidates were more likely to focus on issues of racial identity and authenticity and were more dependent on an overall racial frame than coverage of elections that included only white candidates. They also found that in races involving minority *and* white candidates, media paid significantly less attention to policy issues and significantly more attention to the race of the candidates and potential voters. Conversely, in all-white contests, the racial identities of voters or candidates were rarely mentioned.

Terkildsen and Damore (1999) looked at news coverage of biracial elections in the 1990 and 1992 cycles, including in their analysis contests involving two white candidates. They found that

White politicians received more coverage than their African American opponents. Additionally, races between two White candidates received twice as much coverage as races between two Black candidates. Moreover, in White-only elections, race was never mentioned, but in races between two Black candidates, race remained the most salient feature in the media's coverage. Jeffries (2002) explored the election coverage of Douglas Wilder's 1985 lieutenant governor's campaign and 1989 gubernatorial campaign. Content analysis of one liberal and one conservative newspaper found that Wilder received more overall attention, compared to the other candidate; and Wilder received an equal amount of favorable coverage, but a greater amount of negative coverage (unflattering racial references). For example, the newspaper photos of Wilder gave the impression that Wilder was "unapproachable," by selecting pictures that made Wilder look "worn out and un-groomed" (p. 691); photographs of Coleman (his white opponent), were either "neutral to favorable. The second hypothesis will test if race is more salient in biracial elections than same race elections. It will also test if race is more salient than issues in the news coverage of biracial elections.

H2: In comparison to other traits, mentions of race will be more prevalent in the news coverage of the Atlanta election than the news coverage of the New Orleans election.

H2a: News coverage of the Atlanta election will pay significantly more attention to the race of the candidates and potential voters and significantly less attention to the candidates issue stances.

Stereotypes:

Major & Coleman (2008) examined newspaper coverage of the 2003 race for governor in Louisiana. Specifically, the study examines what changes occur in media coverage when two minorities run against each other exclusive of a White, male candidate in the race. The political candidates included Bobby Jindal, a first-generation Indian-American, and Kathleen Blanco, a Caucasian woman. According to Major & Coleman (2008), newspaper coverage aligned both

candidates with issues stereotypically assigned to each gender. Thus, newspapers discussed Blanco's stances on health care and education more often than Jindal's, and discussed Jindal's stances on topics like the economy and crime more than Blanco's (p.326). This finding is particularly interesting because it points to the power of gender schemas; both candidates were more familiar and experienced with issues stereotypically assigned to the opposite gender, yet newspaper coverage emphasized the issues the candidates were least familiar with because those issues fit into accepted gender schemas.

Major & Coleman point out that gender schemas are deeply rooted. They found that newspapers paid more attention to Jindal's ethnic background than they did to Blanco's (p.325).

In essence, newspapers covered both candidates using the same stereotypes and frames previously used in media coverage of a minority or woman running against a Caucasian male for political office. Many of the references to Blanco's gender and Jindal's ethnic background were positive, however, stereotypical coverage, even when positive, can activate negative stereotypes, or cause a person to misremember information they have read so that it is more consistent with their gender schemas (p.328). This study is one of few that examine a race with two minorities. It found the female candidate received more coverage about her gender, and the minority candidate received more coverage of his race.

In Schaffner and Gadson's (2004) "Reinforcing Stereotypes? Race and Local Television News Coverage of Congress," the authors seek to answer the question "If African American House members are becoming more like their nonblack colleagues, then why do many citizens continue to hold these stereotypes about African American legislators?" (p. 604). The authors highlight the fact that local news is a critical link between House members and constituents. They go on to present the idea that, "Local television news stations may be partially responsible

for the prevailing stereotype of African American House members who narrowly focused on race-oriented issues” (p. 605). In efforts to assess the connection and to answer their research question they examine through content analysis how local television news stations report on incumbent legislators.

The author’s findings revealed a plethora of things. The first being house members receive more coverage when their district dominates more of the media market, when the media market dominates the majority of their district, and when their district is in the same state as the market. They also found that house members who are more active and who introduce several bills appear to be more newsworthy. Arguably their most significant finding was that African American legislators received significantly more coverage than their nonblack colleagues. More importantly however, that the content or substance of the coverage can still put them at a disadvantage. “By producing coverage largely on race-related issues, constituents are left with the impression that the legislators work in Washington is focused narrowly on those topics” (p. 613).

Huddy & Terkildsen (1993) investigated how gender stereotypes may lead voters to assume that male or female candidates hold certain strengths or weaknesses as political figures. Huddy & Terkildsen call this “gender-trait” stereotyping because of the emphasis on gender-based characteristics. Based on previous studies, they defined stereotypical behavior for women and men as opposite of one another: “A typical woman is seen as warm, gentle, kind, and passive, whereas a typical man is viewed as tough, aggressive, and assertive” (p.121). The study found that gender-trait stereotypes did affect what policy areas voters thought male and female candidates would be strong in. Because women were seen as compassionate and sensitive, voters believed women would be better able to handle “soft” issues like education and healthcare. In

contrast, because men were viewed as aggressive and self-confident, voters assumed they were better equipped to handle military and economic issues.

Huddy & Terkildsen's (1993) research may be helpful in understanding why journalists make certain framing decisions. Journalists are also voters and individuals, and their (conscious and unconscious) personal impressions of how each gender should act certainly can affect how they frame male and female political candidates as journalists. Huddy & Terkildsen's findings help to explain why journalists may focus on issues like education and healthcare when discussing a female political candidate, and why conversely, they may focus on "hard" topics like the military and economy when discussing male political candidates (Major & Coleman, 318).

Cassese and Holman's (2017), "Party and Gender Stereotypes in Campaign Attacks" evaluates how the content and substance of campaign attacks influences political decision-making. The article focuses on how attacks using traits and issues that are stereotypically associated with political parties and gender interact with candidate characteristics to influence voter behavior. The authors begin the discussion by asking two key questions about the substance of campaign attacks. First, do campaign attacks that utilize gendered or partisan traits and issues work? Second, are attacks on the traits and issues typically associated with the candidate's party or gender more successful than attacks on counter-stereotypical traits and issues? They rely on expectancy-violation theory to argue attacks on a candidate's "home-turf," or those traits or issues stereotypically associated with their party or gender, may be more effective in reducing support than attacks that are not about stereotypic strengths of the group.

The authors evaluate the role of stereotypes and expectancy violation in negative campaigning with two experiments. The first a trait attack experiment, and the second an issue

attack experiment. They found that female candidates, mainly Democrats, consistently face harsher punishment from voters when attacks focus on feminine traits. Also, they found little evidence of partisan expectancy violation with Democrats and Republicans equally likely to be harmed by stereotypic or non-stereotype attacks. Their results support their Gender-Expectancy

Hypothesis, in that candidates are more harmed by attacks that emphasize stereotypically feminine traits. When considered together, the party and gender results from studies one and two suggest that reactions to these kinds of attacks may be more driven by gender than by party, but ultimately reflect integrated evaluations of a candidate's gender and party. The news medias focus on candidates political issue stances will be tested with the third hypothesis. The fourth hypothesis will examine the types of campaign attacks the candidates received.

H3: Candidates in both the New Orleans and Atlanta runoff elections will receive more issue coverage on issues stereotypically assigned to women.

H4: Candidates in both the New Orleans and Atlanta runoff elections will face campaign attacks that focus on feminine traits.

Intersectionality:

The theory of intersectionality would suggest that race and gender interact to create problematic media patterns. The metaphor of intersection is used to describe the ways in which variables of identity such as race and gender are both mutually represented (Ward, 2016). For example, considering only the effects of a single variable of identity on campaign coverage, research on women and minorities in politics would run the risk of making claims about media treatment of “female” or “minority” candidates that obscures the experiences of minority women.

Gershon (2012) shows that when an intersectional approach is employed, by comparing patterns of coverage of minority women, minority men, white women, and white men—a different pattern emerges. Among incumbent U.S. House representatives running for reelection in 2006,

minority men and white women received coverage comparable to white men, but minority women received less coverage and less positive coverage than all other groups. Therefore Gershon's findings indicate that, in terms of the frequency and tone of coverage, the effects of race or gender alone are not disadvantageous for white women and minority males but that the intersectional effects of race and gender continue to result in unfavorable coverage for minority women. The fifth hypothesis will test if the intersectional effects of race and gender continue to result in a lower frequency of coverage for minority women.

H5: There will not be a significant difference in the amount of name mentions for the candidates in the New Orleans runoff election.

H5a: Bottoms will receive significantly less name mentions than Norwood in the news coverage of the Atlanta runoff election.

METHODOLOGY

This study will examine newspaper coverage of the mayoral candidates to identify differences in the amount of coverage, and the amount of trait versus issue coverage each candidate received. Although this study will not directly explore voter perception of the female mayoral candidates, it will hopefully provide journalists, public relations practitioners, mass

communication, political science and political communication scholars' one method of examining what coverage looks like when the candidates do not fit the norm.

In order to compare the differences in how female political candidates are covered by the news media in an all-female race, this study will use a quantitative content analysis method. This study will collect data on media coverage from the 2017 New Orleans and Atlanta mayoral runoff elections. These elections were chosen for a number of reasons; beginning with the fact that they both featured two women in their runoffs. Second, that there were "firsts" at stake in each election. An election featuring two female candidates does not happen often, and one with two Black Democrat women is even more rare. Also, comparisons of media coverage on female political candidates campaigning for the same position are more compelling than the comparison of two candidates seeking different offices. The unique circumstance that there were two major southern cities electing a female mayor in the same year, will serve as a constant in this research: media coverage of all candidates will be in relation to the same political office. Any differences in media coverage found during the course of research will not be attributed to a difference in the political office sought by either candidate.

For the purposes of this study, coverage of the 2017 New Orleans and Atlanta mayoral runoff elections will be examined in *The Times Picayune* and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*.

The Times Picayune, which has a circulation size of 97, 249, and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, which has a circulation size of 371, 850, were chosen because they are the two cities primary newspapers. Also, because they are both featured in NewsBank's database, which has an extensive archive that allows users to access articles at no cost since LSU subscribes to it. This means collecting data on the 2017 mayoral runoff elections from *The Times Picayune* and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* was a feasible research goal.

Content analysis is a method of research defined, in brief, as “the systematic assignment of communication content to categorize according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005, p. 3). Under the consideration of framing theory, researchers are able to conduct content analysis by measuring clusters of messages also known as frames to see how these are then incorporated into their audiences’ schemata (Entman, 1993). Content analysis is essential to finding patterns, based on which scholars and researchers can methodically evaluate news media and its use of framing. In turn, this allows for the comparison of possible agenda setters’ bias of the event. Thus, this study will use a content analysis for its method of analysis.

This study will examine the time between the primary elections and the runoffs. In the case of the New Orleans election, data will be collected from October 15, 2017 (the day after the primary election), to November 18, 2017 (the day before the runoff election). In the case of the Atlanta election, data will be collected from November 8, 2017 (the day after the primary election), to December 4, 2017 (the day before the runoff election). Between the two elections, a total of one hundred and fifty-four newspaper articles and editorials from the time leading up to the runoff elections were gathered through NewsBank. There were a total of 60 stories for the New Orleans election, and 94 stories for the Atlanta election.

The days sampled include all individual news stories either within *The Times Picayune* or the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* that mention the candidates name on that day. The search terms used were “Cantrell” and “Charbonnet” for the New Orleans election, and “Bottoms” and “Norwood” for the Atlanta election.

This study will divide newspaper content into two categories: candidate traits and issues. Candidate traits will include any mention of a candidate’s individual attributes such as gender,

experience, race, personal appearance and any other issues that relate to a candidate's personal life. The candidate traits were operationally defined as:

Gender/Gender Role	If the paragraph referred to the candidate as woman, female, daughter, mother, grandmother, wife, spouse and/or married to.
Race/Ethnicity	Any reference to the candidate or voters being White, Caucasian, Black, African American, minority, non-White etc. If the paragraph included both gender role and race, it was coded twice.
Appearance	Any reference to the candidate's physical features such as age, hair color or style, clothing, weight, height, size, grooming, or physical features.
Experience	Any mention of the candidate's education, experience, titles, jobs, past positions, past political actions, past political involvement and any accomplishments.
Campaign Activity	Any mention of the candidate's campaign activity, endorsements, spending, poll results, events sponsored, responses to attacks and or accusations, and statements made at events.
Personal Background	Any mention of the candidate's personal background such as where they are from, where they currently live, family ties, personal finances and personal characteristics (i.e. caring, responsible, etc.)

Every mention of a trait in association with one of the candidates will be tracked to produce a total amount of coded trait mentions for that candidate.

Issues will include any issue that is of interest to voters, including the economy, education, health care, crime, housing and the overall environment of the city. The issues will be operationally defined as:

Economy	Any topic relating to employment, business and industry, tourism, taxes, budgets, etc.
Education	Any mention of teaching, creating a well-educated workforce, higher education, early childhood development, education funding and school's

	performance.
Healthcare	Any reference to prescriptions, healthcare insurance, and hospitals.
Crime	Any reference to public safety, crime/violence statistics, neighborhood watch programs, gun control, community policing, increasing police.
Housing	Any reference to affordable housing and gentrification.
City Issues	Any mention of traffic congestion, public transit, street repairs, blight, homelessness, poverty, government ethics/corruption, failing infrastructure and flooding.

Issues were distinguished from the candidate's experience using the following guidelines: If a candidate's previous experience was mentioned in conjunction with an issue, the paragraph was coded in the experience category. Every mention of an issue in association with one of the candidates will be tracked to produce a total amount of coded issue mentions for that candidate. A significant body of work suggests that the media and voters ascribe certain stereotyped policy competencies and personality characteristics to women candidates. In terms of gender linked personality traits, women candidates and officeholders are generally viewed and portrayed as needing to be more compassionate, expressive, honest, and better able to deal with constituents than their male counterparts. Men are portrayed as being more competent, decisive, and stronger leaders, and possessing a greater ability to handle a crisis (Alexander and Anderson 1993; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1994). Portrayals of woman candidates generally conform to stereotyped thinking about issue positions as well. Women are assumed and portrayed to be more interested in, and more effective at dealing with issues such as healthcare, education, poverty and the environment than are men, while men are thought to be more competent at dealing with economic development, military, crime and taxes (Dolan 2010, Huddy and Terkildsen 1993, Alexander and Anderson 1993). Perhaps the most important aspect of stereotypes of women

candidates is that idea about the abilities and competencies of female and male candidates may serve as bias for voters to choose or reject a particular candidate.

The amount of newspaper coverage each candidate received is being examined because newspapers play a particularly significant role in the public's education regarding political matters. According to Shea (1996), voters make determinations as to their candidate of choice based on name recognition, constituent service, the candidate's style, campaign commercials and local news coverage (p. 58). Latimer and Cotter (1983) found that members of the public, who routinely and consistently vote in elections, including primary and run-off races, rely primarily on newspapers to get their local political news. More recently, Hayes and Lawless (2016) note "In an ever-expanding information environment it might seem surprising, even anachronistic, that we rely on local newspapers to analyze gender dynamics" (pg. 28). Despite the changing media world, the vast majority of information available to voters comes from local print media.

FINDINGS

Over 150 articles were analyzed in total, of which 60 were dedicated to the New Orleans runoff election, and 94 to the Atlanta runoff election. The outcomes for the five hypotheses are presented and discussed below.

Hypothesis 1:

H1: Candidates in both the New Orleans and Atlanta runoff elections will receive more trait coverage than issue coverage.

Races in which women run are more likely to yield news coverage focused on candidate traits. In

the campaign period between the announcements of the runoff candidates, up to the runoff election itself, I expected all the candidates to receive more trait coverage than issue coverage even in the absence of a male candidate. Paired sample t-tests show a statistically significant difference in the amount of total trait versus issue coverage Cantrell, Charbonnet, Bottoms, and

Norwood received ($p < .05$) for all candidates.

In the news coverage of the New Orleans runoff election, Cantrell received significantly more trait coverage ($p < .05$, $m = 7.10$, $sd = 8.35$) with 55 percent trait coverage and 45 percent issue coverage. Charbonnet received significantly more trait coverage ($p < .05$, $m = 5.70$, $sd = 7.56$) having 84 percent trait coverage and 16 percent issue coverage. In the news coverage of the

Atlanta runoff election, Bottoms received 88 percent trait coverage and 12 percent issue coverage. Norwood received 91 percent trait coverage and 9 percent issue coverage (See Chart 1

& Chart 2).

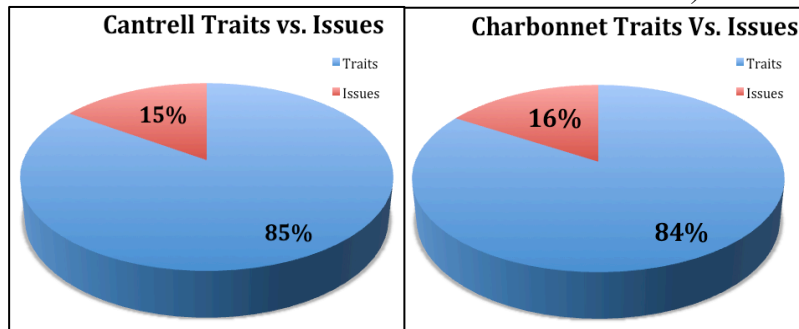


Chart 1. Cantrell & Charbonnet Trait vs. Issue Coverage

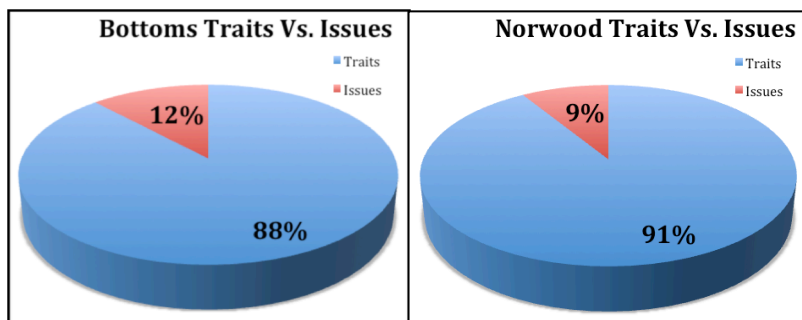


Chart 2. Bottoms & Norwood Trait vs. Issue Coverage

Hypothesis 2:

H2: In comparison to other traits, mentions of race will be more prevalent in the news coverage of the Atlanta election than the news coverage of the New Orleans election.

H2a: News coverage of the Atlanta election will pay significantly more attention to the race of the candidates and potential voters and significantly less attention to the candidates issue stances.

It has been found that in races involving minority and white candidates, media paid significantly less attention to policy issues and significantly more attention to the race of the candidates and potential voters. Conversely, in all-white contests, the racial identities of voters or candidates are rarely mentioned. Being that the New Orleans runoff election featured two Black candidates, and the Atlanta runoff election featured a Black and a White candidate I expected coverage of the Atlanta election to pay more attention to race than coverage of the New Orleans runoff election since the candidates were of different races. I also expected race to be more salient than the candidates issue stances in coverage of the Atlanta runoff election.

Mentions of race were indeed more prevalent in the Atlanta runoff election. In the New Orleans runoff election, mentions of the candidates' race and or potential voters race accounted for 4.65 percent of the candidates combined trait mentions. Out of the 60 stories coded for the New Orleans runoff election there were only 22 mentions of the candidates race and or potential voters race out of a combined total of 473 trait mentions.

In the Atlanta runoff election, mentions of the candidates' race and or potential voters race accounted for 21.13 percent of the candidates combined trait mentions. Out of the 94 stories coded for the Atlanta runoff election there were 259 mentions of the candidates race and or potential voters race out of a combined total of 1,226 trait mentions (*See Chart 3*).

A paired sample t-test showed a statistically significant difference in the amount of race and issues coverage Norwood received ($p < .05$, $m = 9$, $sd = 5.32$). Of the 47 stories coded, Norwood's race was mentioned 137 times, compared to a total of only 61 mentions of her issue stances. Surprisingly the difference in the amount of race and issues coverage Bottoms received was not statistically significant ($p > .05$, $m = .85$, $sd = 5.46$). Of the 47 stories coded, Bottom's race was mentioned only 122 times, compared to a total of 82 mentions of her issue stances.

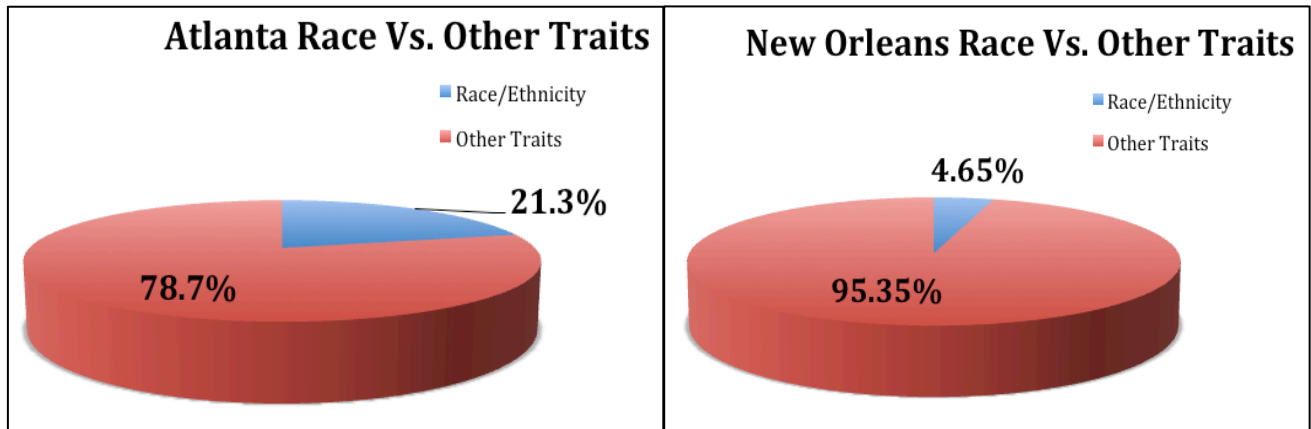


Chart 3. Atlanta & New Orleans Race vs. Other Traits Coverage

Hypothesis 3:

H3: Candidates in both the New Orleans and Atlanta runoff elections will receive more issue coverage on issues stereotypically assigned to women.

Interestingly, candidates in neither runoff elections received more stereotypical issue coverage. In the New Orleans runoff election, Cantrell only had 12.5 percent stereotypical feminine issue coverage, receiving 6 stereotypical feminine issue mentions and 42 stereotypical masculine issue mentions. Charbonnet only had 19.5 percent stereotypical feminine issue coverage, receiving 8 stereotypical feminine issue mentions and 33 stereotypical masculine issue mentions.

In the Atlanta runoff election, Bottoms only had 34.15 percent stereotypical feminine issue coverage, receiving 28 stereotypical feminine issue mentions and 54 stereotypical masculine issue mentions. Norwood only had 26.21 percent stereotypical feminine issue coverage,

receiving 16 stereotypical feminine issue mentions and 45 stereotypical masculine issue mentions (See Chart 4).

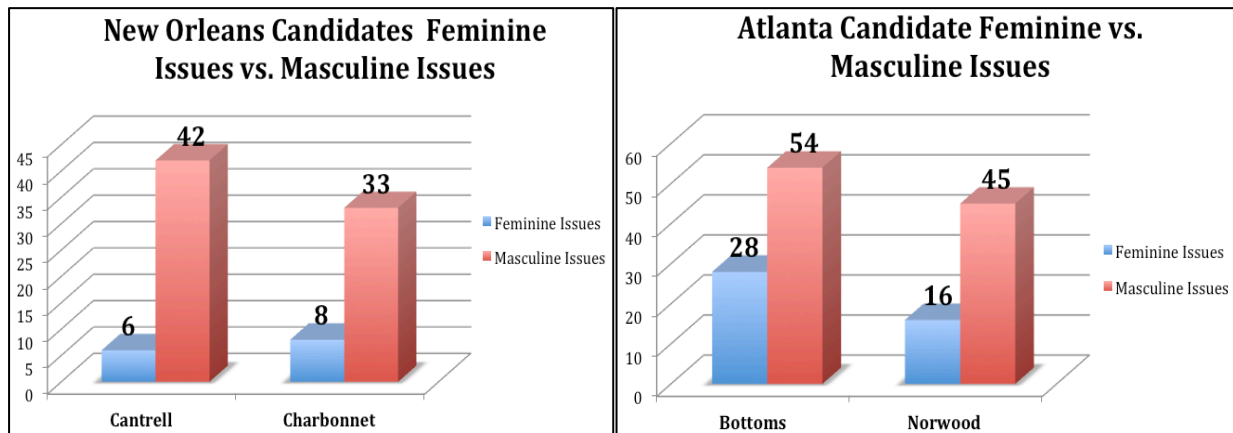


Chart 4. New Orleans & Atlanta Feminine vs. Masculine Issues Coverage

Hypothesis 4:

H4: Candidates in both the New Orleans and Atlanta runoff elections will face campaign attacks that focus on feminine traits.

Unlike the other hypotheses, the fourth hypothesis required a qualitative content analysis approach. It has been found that female candidates, mainly Democrats, consistently face harsher punishment from voters when attacks focus on feminine traits. An analysis of the types of campaign attacks the candidates received was included in this study because, a notable amount of the coverage candidate received was about or included discussions related to campaign attacks. All of the candidates were faced with attacks during their campaigns. In the New Orleans runoff election, Charbonnet started to receive attacks first. During her campaign, Charbonnet had the backing of many powerful players in the Democratic establishment, including Democrat State Representative Cedric Richmond, a slew of state lawmakers, and former city politicians. Many of those endorsements ended up making Charbonnet the focus of

several attacks. A shadow campaign emerged when a political action committee (PAC), Notforsalenola.com, unleashed a vicious attack on Charbonnet, seeking to tie her to corrupt politicians of the past and two campaign consultants whose hardball tactics are widely acknowledged in political circles but unknown among average voters. Voice of the People PAC, which businessman and reality television star Sidney Torres funded, also became a factor in the election after Charbonnet declined at the last minute to participate in the debate he sponsored. In response, Torres cut several ads attacking Charbonnet on many of the same fronts that Notforsalenola.com did. So, while she drove home her deep roots in the city and made promises to tackle crime and lift wages, she was also trying to fend off concerted campaigns to derail her candidacy. Charbonnet eventually cut ads acknowledging the Notforsalenola.com and Voice of the People PACs, denouncing its attacks as "old, dirty politics," along with being both racist and sexist.

While perhaps not as much as her opponent, Cantrell faced several attacks during the last stretch of the race. The first was in the form of a mailer that appeared to be a racially tinged attack that targeted white areas of the city. The booklet's first page, titled "Meet the Cantrells," featured a picture of the candidate with an angry expression on her face and the caption "Straight Outta Compton." The intent appeared to be to conjure up stereotypes of the southern California city while also painting Cantrell, who is from California, as an outsider. The flyers were paid for by the Truth in Government Political Action Committee.

Following these flyers, Cantrell's opponent Charbonnet, started to make jabs at her as well. The first went after Cantrell's role in founding a Broadmoor charter school that was later given a failing grade by the state and taken over by a new operator. The second accused Cantrell, a City Council member, of missing a key council committee meeting before Katrina's August 5th flood.

The former judge's campaign also launched a radio blitz accusing Cantrell of grossly misusing her city-issued credit card. The ad reminded voters of Cantrell's history of personal financial troubles of foreclosures, ethics fines and more. Ultimately, the ad claimed Cantrell could not be trusted to mind the city treasury. Several news organizations also received packets of documents detailing nearly five years of questionable (and possibly illegal) expenditures by Cantrell, all on her city-issued credit card. Unlike her opponent, Cantrell's attacks didn't happen until the run off for the most part. The claims of Cantrell's misuse of her city credit card launched a federal investigation.

The Atlanta mayoral candidates faced allegations of shady business dealings, inappropriate payments, financial irresponsibility and detrimental political ties. Perhaps the biggest scandal and attack that plagued the candidates was an investigation into campaign finances, forcing the two candidates to release their campaign finance reports as well as personal finance information. Throughout the campaign, Bottoms had to constantly reinforce that her administration would not be an extension of the former mayors administration. Norwood was continuously labeled as a "closet republican" and Trump supporter.

Hypothesis 5:

H5: There will not be a significant difference in the amount of name mentions for the candidates in the New Orleans runoff election.

H5a: Bottoms will receive significantly less name mentions than Norwood in the news coverage of the Atlanta runoff election.

It has been found that the effects of race or gender alone are not only disadvantageous for white women and minority males but that the intersectional effects of race and gender result in unfavorable coverage for minority women. Since both the candidates in the New Orleans runoff election were of the same gender and race, I expected them to receive a balanced amount of name mentions. Results showed there was a balanced amount of name mentions in the New

Orleans runoff election. There was a difference of 62 name mentions, with Cantrell receiving 263, and Charbonnet receiving 201. A paired sample t-test revealed the difference in the amount of name mentions Cantrell and Charbonnet received was not significant ($p > .05$, $m = 2.06$, $sd = 9.33$) in the New Orleans runoff election, therefore supporting hypothesis five.

In news coverage of the Atlanta runoff election, I expected Bottoms, the Black candidate, to receive significantly less name mentions than her White opponent. A paired sample t-test revealed there was not a statistically significant difference in the amount of name mentions Bottoms and Norwood received ($p > .05$, $m = -.31$, $sd = 5.45$) in the Atlanta runoff election.

While Bottoms did in fact receive less name mentions, it was only a 15 fewer name mentions than Norwood (*See Chart 5*). For a visual representation of the results.

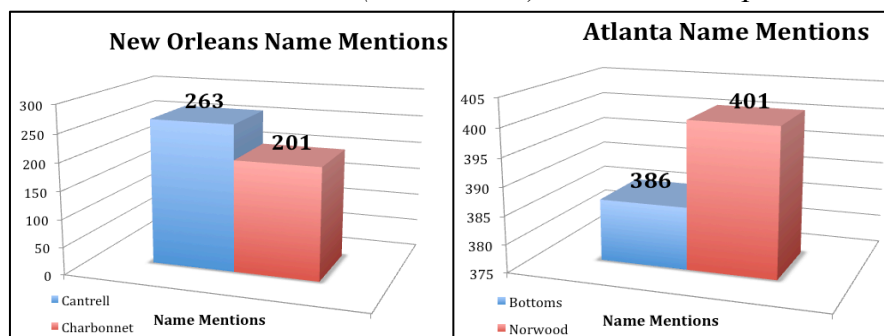


Chart 5. New Orleans & Atlanta Name Mentions

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This study examines how local newspapers covered the New Orleans and Atlanta runoff mayoral to determine if, even when not compared to a White male candidate, news coverage would still focus on female candidates traits over issues. Framing and agenda setting serve as the theoretical framework for this study, as the news media plays a major role in how political candidates are perceived.

The findings from this study are varied and complex. These results indicate that women running for office still face a clear disadvantage in terms of securing balanced trait and issue coverage.

All of the candidates received significantly more trait coverage than issue coverage. In news coverage of the New Orleans runoff election, “experience” and “campaign activity” were the two categories that yielded the most name mentions. The “experience” mentions mainly consisted of phrases like “former city judge,” and “former city councilwoman.” It also included a large amount of name mentions in relation to scandals and political attacks. The “campaign activity” category primarily consisted on endorsement mentions, campaign appearances, and campaign attacks and responses to attacks.

In news coverage of the Atlanta runoff election, “race/ethnicity” and “campaign activity” were the two categories that yielded the most name mentions. The “race/ethnicity” mentions will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs. As in the New Orleans runoff election coverage, the “campaign activity” category predominately consisted of endorsements, and campaign attacks and responses, announcements and appearances. It was consistently mentioned that the former mayor had endorsed Bottoms and picked her as his successor.

Significant differences in news coverage of same race/ethnicity and biracial elections also emerge. In elections featuring two women where one is a minority woman, and the other White, race remains a more salient topic. The subtext of the Atlanta runoff was that a 40-year string of African-American mayors could end was ever present. The city's population has grown whiter since former Mayor Kasim Reed narrowly beat Norwood in 2009, and with the number of black and white voters almost evenly split, race definitely came into play.

The race of candidates and their potential voters was a key factor and discussion point. Bottoms, was still portrayed as the “Black” candidate, and Norwood was still portrayed as the “White”

candidate, despite her reticence to discuss race during her campaign. Take for example this quote from the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, “Forty-seven percent voted for one of the candidates in next week's run-off; 53 percent didn't. Forty-nine percent voted for a white candidate, 51 percent for a black candidate.”

Many of the race/ethnicity mentions Norwood received were about how if she were elected she would be Atlanta's first White mayor in nearly 44 years. There also appeared to be a considerable amount of coverage about what voter demographics the candidates had to secure in order to win the election. The following quotes highlight what that coverage looked like, “Norwood, who would be the first white mayor of Atlanta since 1973, is pressing for high-profile black supporters to counter attacks by opponents who have been trying to paint her as a “closet Republican” since she was narrowly defeated by Reed in the 2009 mayoral race.”

Bottoms, who portrayed herself as “the Democrat for mayor,” was undoubtedly positioned as the Black candidate. “Bottoms also entered the race with advantages. She was the lone African-American female in the race in a city where 58 percent of the electorate are woman and where black woman make up the largest group of “super voters” - those who have voted at least five times in the past four years.”

Most interestingly, in elections featuring two women of the same race/ethnic background, even two minority women, mentions of the candidates and or potential voters race are not as prevalent. The New Orleans runoff election did not center on race nearly as much as the Atlanta runoff election. The Atlanta runoff election had significantly more race mentions than the New Orleans runoff election ($p < .05$, $m = -2.74$, $sd = 4.36$). This challenges Terkildsen and Damore (1999) finding that in races between two Black candidates, race remained the most salient feature in the media's coverage. This raises the question of whether or not race is only the most salient

trait when the candidates have different racial/ethnic backgrounds. While there was still significantly more trait coverage, coverage of same race and same sex elections looks similar to that of elections featuring two white males. This study only examined the runoff election; perhaps there were more mentions of race during the primary election when there were candidates from other races and ethnicities.

The mentions of race in that election were more often in relation to the race of potential voters. For example, “The University of New Orleans poll released this week showing Cantrell up by 11 points, also found that she continues to have strong support across the city among white voters, who are the swing bloc for the two black candidates. Cantrell also does well among millennials.”

As another example, “Charbonnet’s campaign took a calculated risk this week to expand her appeal to white voters by announcing an endorsement from U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise, a white conservative Republican.” In addition, elections featuring two women of the same race and ethnic background tend to yield more balanced name mentions. Contrary to what was expected, elections featuring a minority woman and a White woman also yield a balanced amount of name mentions. This finding suggests that intersectional effects of race and gender could be changing.

Candidates in neither of the runoff elections received issue coverage that was stereotypically more feminine. All of the candidates had the most issues in the “city issues” category. In news coverage of the New Orleans runoff election, “city issues” were mostly comprised of issue stances on a possible lawsuit against oil and gas companies for damaging coastal wetlands, improvements to streets, corruption free administration and the city’s troubled drainage and pumping system, along with reforms at the Sewerage & Water Board. In news coverage of the Atlanta runoff election, “city issues” consisted mostly of issue stances on transit, improvements

to the city's procurement process and substantial amount of discussion on plans to reform ethics and increase transparency in City Hall.

Following the rise of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election, it would seem as though gender bias permeates every aspect of campaigning and coverage. All of the candidates received very few mentions of their gender. In New Orleans, they were electing their first woman as mayor, one would expect that there would have been more gendered coverage. In Atlanta, the fact that the city could possibly be electing its first white mayor in 40 years seemed to have been more important than the fact that they would also be electing a woman.

While this study does not focus on voter evaluation, research suggests candidates are more harmed by attacks that emphasize stereotypically feminine traits. While Charbonnet's attacks weren't necessarily stereotypically feminine, several of Cantrell's were. Cantrell faced attacks about her personal spending of taxpayer's money portrayed her as untrustworthy. The mailers declaring the California native "Straight Outta Compton" and scrutinizing her family's relationship to Detroit depicted her as angry and harsh. In general, the subtext of the attacks featured in the Atlanta runoff election paint the candidates as being untrustworthy. It can also be argued that attacks towards the candidates' ability to manage their personal or city finances were gendered. Stereotypically, men are seen and portrayed as being better at managing money in comparison to women.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study examined news coverage to determine if atypical candidates led to atypical coverage. It found moderate support for the idea that news coverage of elections featuring two female candidates is different from the norm. Female candidates continued to receive more trait coverage than issue coverage. (For a more in depth and visual representation of the relative amounts of trait and issue coverage for each candidate see the appendix.) Race more so than gender remained paramount on the media's agenda. This analysis adds to second-

level agenda-setting literature as it shows the salience of race still applies to female candidates even when not compared to traditional White male candidates.

The media did however, break from some traditional stereotypes, as the news coverage of the New Orleans run off election, which featured two Black candidates, was not largely centered on race. This also adds to agenda-setting research in that it advances the idea that under certain conditions, specifically being compared to traditional candidates, might lead to the media portraying Black female and White female candidates differently, or at least less along stereotypical lines.

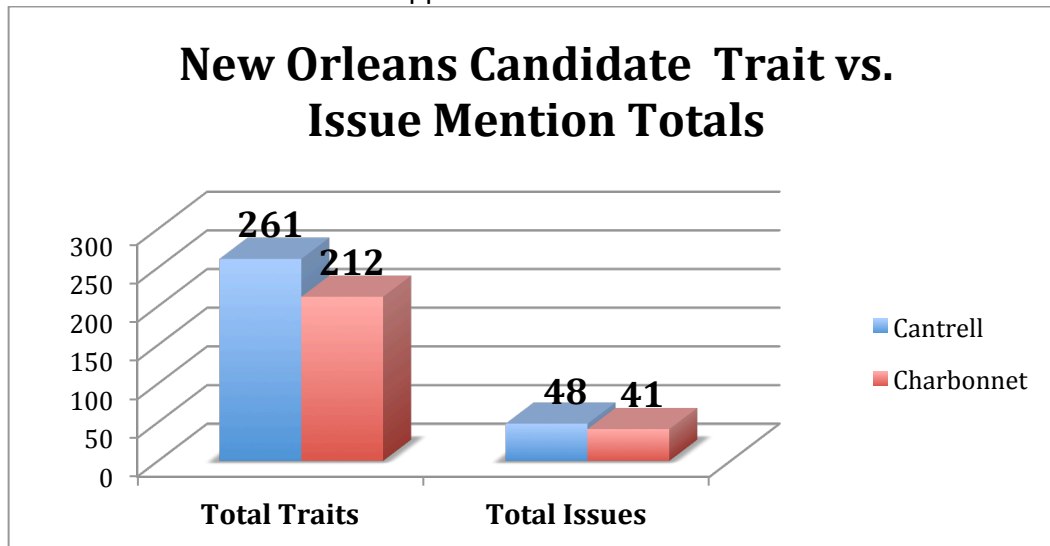
In this way, the media is changing the way they cover female and African American candidates. In step with second-level agenda- setting, this suggests the media might be changing the way the public views women and African American candidates. If so, perhaps elections between Black and female frontrunners will not be so atypical in the future. Future studies should account for the somewhat low profile and local nature of the 2017 New Orleans and Atlanta mayoral elections. Perhaps the degree to which gender stereotypes are applied is related to the level of interest in a particular political contest. Had this study examined news coverage of the primary and run off elections there may have been less attention paid to candidate traits.

Another possibility for future research may include usage of a different set of content categories.

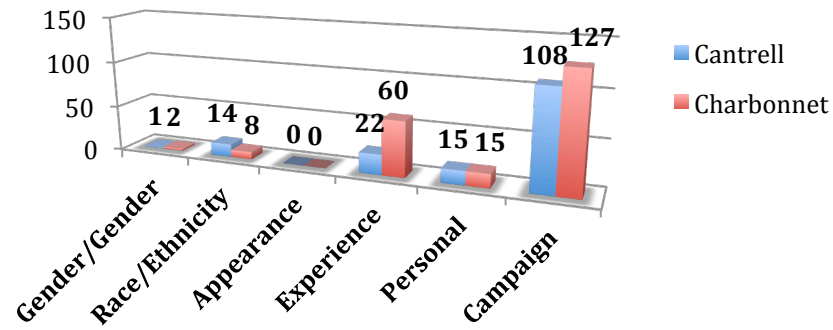
A high amount of data fell into the “city issues”, and “campaign activity” categories. Perhaps future research could design a more comprehensive set of content categories. At the same time, future research could adapt the content categories to reflect the content that is actually covered in newspaper articles – this study did not foresee the possibility that education would never be mentioned in the selected newspaper articles. Finally, future research should address how news coverage influences voter preferences and decisions.

APPENDIX

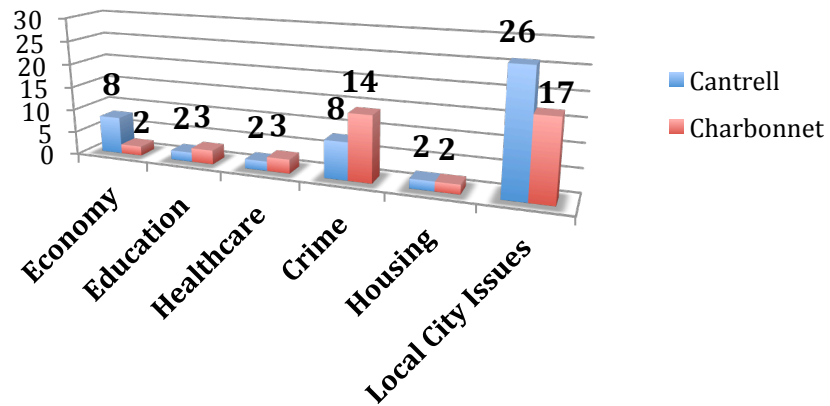
A. 1: Supplemental Charts & Tables



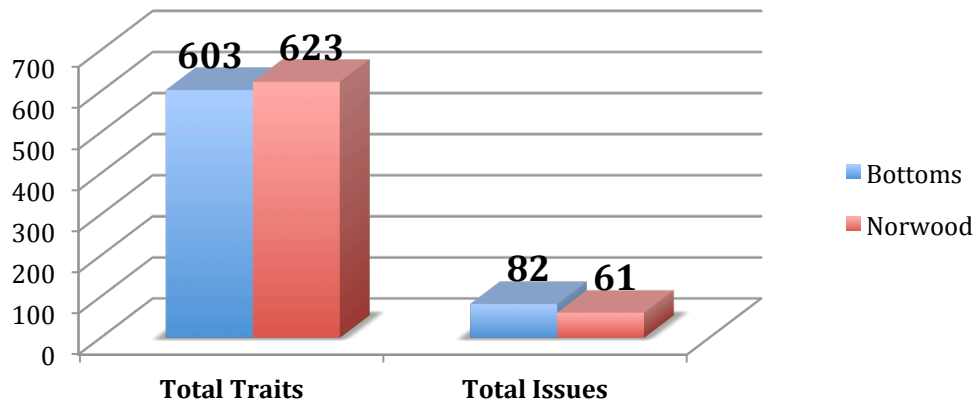
New Orleans Candidate Trait Mentions



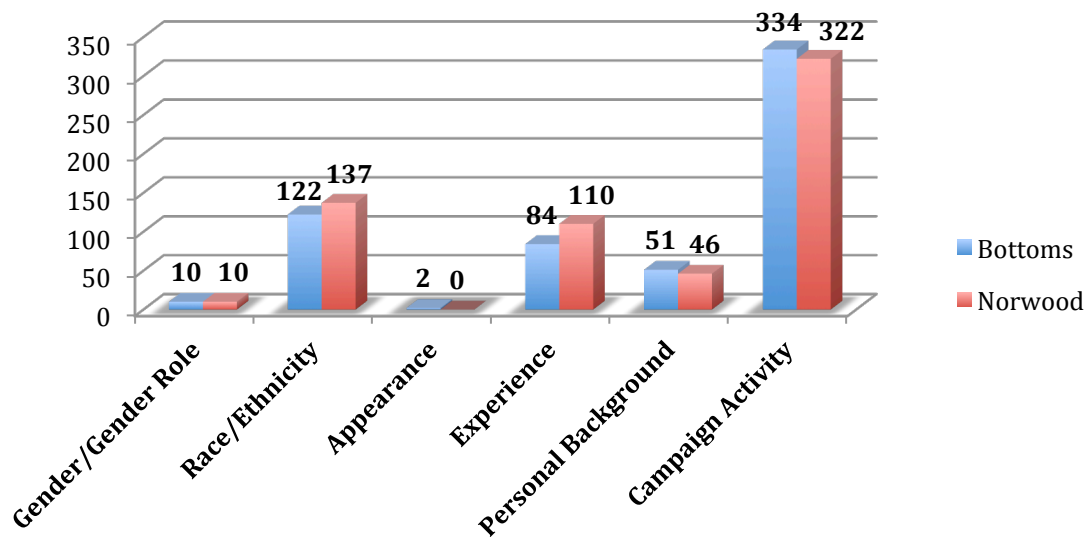
New Orleans Candidate Issue Mentions

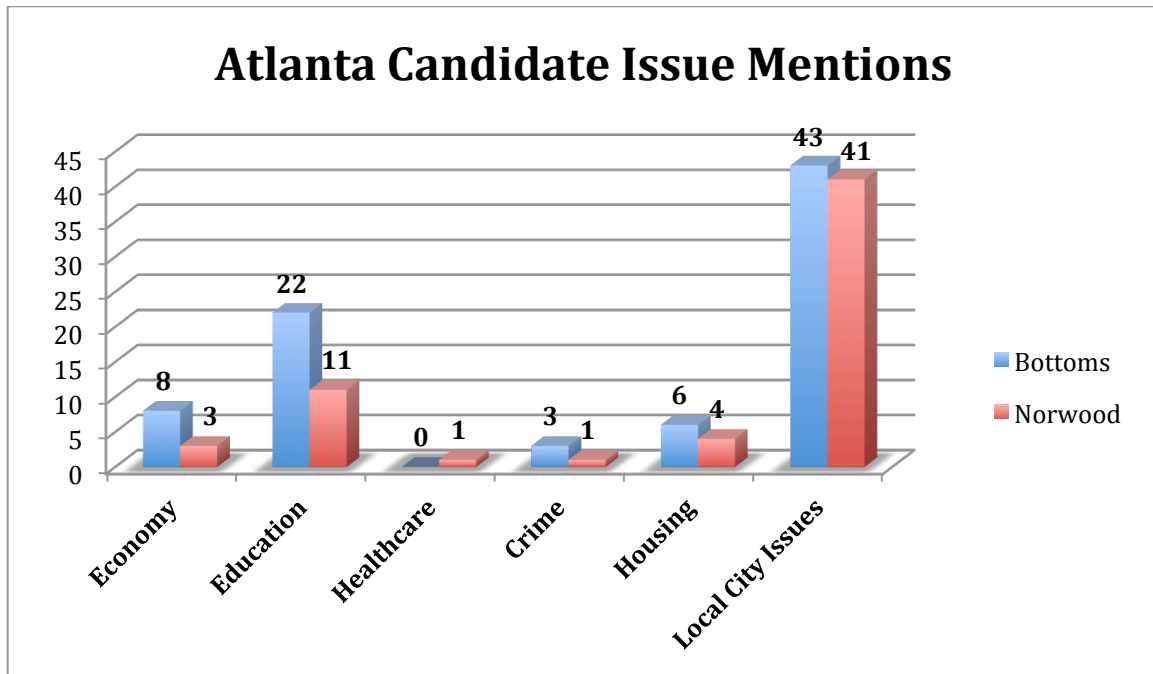


Atlanta Candidate Trait vs. Issue Mention Totals



Atlanta Candidate Trait Mentions





New Orleans Traits vs. Issues Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	CantrellTraitsTotal - CantrellIssuesTotal	7.10000	8.35567	1.52553	3.97994	10.22006	4.654	29	.000
Pair 2	CharbonnetTraitsTotal - CharbonnetIssuesTotal	5.70000	7.56193	1.38061	2.87633	8.52367	4.129	29	.000

Atlanta Traits vs. Issues Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	BottomsTraits Total - BottomsIssues Total	11.08511	11.68394	1.70428	7.65457	14.51564	6.504	46	.000
Pair 2	NorwoodTraits Total - NorwoodIssues Total	11.89362	11.63435	1.69704	8.47765	15.30959	7.008	46	.000

Atlanta Candidates Race Vs. Issues Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	BottomsRACE - BottomsIssuesTotal	.85106	5.46920	.79776	-.75475	2.45688	1.067	46	.292
Pair 2	NorwoodRACE - NorwoodIssuesTotal	1.55319	5.32757	.77711	-.01104	3.11742	1.999	46	.052

A. 10: Table 4:

New Orleans Candidate Name Mentions Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval				
					of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	CantrellNAME - CharbonnetNAME	2.06667	9.33637	1.70458	-1.41959	5.55292	1.212	29	.235

Atlanta Candidate Name Mentions Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	BottomsNAME - NorwoodNAME	-.31915	5.45777	.79610	-1.92161	1.28331	-.401	46	.690

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	NOLA_Race - ATL_Race	-2.74000	4.36035	.61665	-3.97920	-1.50080	-4.443	49	.000

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VITA

Sirdaria Williams, born in Cincinnati, Ohio, went straight to graduate school after receiving her bachelor's degree from the Xavier University of Louisiana. She began to work as a public information officer for the Baton Rouge District Attorney while in graduate school. Upon completion of her master's degree, she will continue as a public information officer, while being open to new opportunities.